

MERRY CHRISTMAS! NEWSLETTER

HO, HO, HO! Here is your latest dose of news straight from old Santa RUSS, about an exciting new development in the upcoming publication of the newest component of the COMPLETE EC LIBRARY, THE COMPLETE MAD. I announced in my last newsletter that there would be a surprise with MAD, but at that time, even old RUSS didn't know the extent of the surprise!

Originally, the surprise was going to be that a few of the stories in the COMPLETE MAD were to be printed in full color. That idea has grown and changed several times until the bottom line is...THE COMPLETE MAD will be printed in FULL COLOR, all 23 issues, every page, in full color! Yes, that's going to make the final product more expensive (approx. \$125/set), but the good part of the surprise is that if you have already ordered the COMPLETE MAD at the special \$75. pre-publication price, or have subscribed at an even lower price, you will still get the set at no extra cost to you!!

That's the good news. The bad news is that it's going to take many months to finish the color separations for doing MAD in full color, and you will not have all four volumes in your hands before the middle of 1986. But Volume One (issues 1-6) should be finished by February, and when it is ready I will send it out to all PRE-PUBS and SUBSCRIBERS, so they'll have something to read while we are still working on the other 3 volumes in the set.

Once I had made the big decision to print MAD in FULL COLOR,



a couple of problems came up. For contractual reasons, I must publish a few sets in black and white (B&W), with no color added to the stories, just like the rest of the EC LIBRARY. Also, there are those collectors who prefer to see the artwork reproduced in B&W...those collectors would want a B&W set of MAD. So, THE COMPLETE MAD will be published in BOTH a FULL COLOR and a B&W EDITION, each at the retail price of \$125. BOTH!! (Gulp!)

There will be a significant difference in the size

of the two editions. The COMPLETE COLOR MAD will be printed in an edition of 10,000 sets, which is twice the initial print run of any of the other EC LIBRARY sets. The larger print run, you probably know, is why I can afford to print MAD in color where I couldn't afford to do any of the other New Trends because of the smaller print runs. On the other hand, the COMPLETE B&W MAD will be printed just for that small, discriminating audience that prefers the artwork without color, in a much smaller print run to be determined mostly by the number of pre-pub and suscription orders.

In the long run, from the collector's point of view, the B&W MAD will be a rarer set than the COLOR MAD, but from a reader's or a consumer's point of view, I know the COLOR MAD will be far more popular.

So, it's your choice. Some collectors will want the B&W MAD only, most of you will want the COLOR MAD only, and a few of you completist EC FAN-ADDICTS will just have to have BOTH editions!!

For those of you who have not yet ordered MAD, you can still save substantially by ordering before the end of February, when the pre-publication offer expires. But you must now specify either B&W MAD or COLOR MAD when you do place your order. Listen now, this is important! EVERYONE WHO HAS ALREADY ORDERED MAD WILL RECEIVE COLOR MAD UNLESS YOU ADVISE ME OTHERWISE!!

So, if I DON'T hear from you, you'll be getting COLOR MAD, one volume at a time, as it is published.



GEE WHILIKERS! THIS IS THE BEST CHRISTMAS I'VE EVER HAD! THE COMPLETE MAD, IN BOTH COLOR AND B&W EDITIONS! I'M SO HAPPY!



If you have already ordered MAD (by sub or pre-pub) and want to receive the B&W MAD, you'll have to let me know this by filling in the order blank enclosed and returning it to me. If you want both editions, then you will have to send an additional \$75. before the pre-pub offer expires at the end of February, 1986. Confusing, huh? To sum up: If you have not ordered MAD yet, you have until 2-28-86 to place your order for either B&W MAD or COLOR MAD at \$75. each (or both for \$150.). If you have ordered MAD and want COLOR MAD only, you have to do nothing. Just wait. Patiently. If you have ordered MAD and want BOTH B&W MAD AND COLOR MAD, you must send an additional \$75. by 2-28-86. If you have already ordered MAD and want to receive B&W MAD only, then notify me by filling in the proper space on the order blank enclosed. I realize that this is confusing...it is to me, too!...but please read it over carefully and decide which edition you want in time to notify me, to avoid lots of the shipping back and forth that might ensue if many collectors receive the wrong edition.

After all, guys, this is MAD we're talking about! You didn't expect its publication to be normal, or simple, did 'ya? It has to be a little crazy!

On the order blank enclosed, you will still find the new EC T-Shirt, the special discount offer on buying several sets in the EC LIBRARY, and specials on other books in stock. EVERYTHING is IN STOCK except of course for MAD.

There are some problems with the new line of full-color EC CLASSICS. Mostly, it is exactly the problem I have been worrying about. After the initial orders for each issue of the CLASSICS, the re-orders are not coming in fast enough to cause a sell-out before we are into another one, so that after a few issues, all my money is tied up in the unsold back issues and I can't afford to keep printing new issues. Possibly I started off too fast, trying to publish them monthly. So, I have decided to change the schedule of publication of the EC CLASSICS to a new issue every six weeks. Hopefully, this will ease the problem and allow the issues a longer selling time. I'm trying to change the variables to make the whole thing work, rather than calling the series a failure and



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just stopping publication. Once again, if you LIKE the EC CLASSICS, and want to see this series continue, the best thing you can do to help, besides buying multiples of each issue for your friends, is to go into your local comic book store and check to see that issues #1, 2, and 3 are all in stock and on display. What happens is, the store will sell out of one or more of them and then not bother to re-stock. I am trying to encourage the stores to keep all issues in stock at all times, and if a few thousand of my good customers, LIKE YOU, walk into these stores and ask about them, that will certainly help.

So, the revised schedule is now for EC CLASSIC #4, SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES to be released next week (week of December 16), followed by WEIRD FANTASY around February 1, followed by VAULT OF HORROR around March 15. After that, we'll see where the series goes from there.

I have just received the shipment of a new EC CLASSICS COUNTER DISPLAY UNIT. This is a cardboard unit which stands up on a counter and holds 20 EC CLASSICS in a side-by-side display, with the Old Witch's face and EC logo prominently displayed on the box. It is an attractive display, and I am making it available to you in two ways: If you want the display only, the price is \$5. postpaid. If you want the display packed with 20 EC CLASSICS (ten each of #1 and #2), the price is \$65. postpaid. This would be a way for you to help support my EC CLASSICS project further.

If any of you would like to approach a book store in your neighborhood which is not now carrying my EC CLASSICS, you could sell them the display with books or have them write to me for a packed display.

I have finally repriced the EC COVER SETS on the enclosed order blank. When each set in the EC LIBRARY is run, I have the full-color covers, which are printed on 100# coated stock, overrun by a few hundred sets. These covers are trimmed out to include the entire cover (no bleeds) and put into an envelope. Bought this way, the covers are very cheap, around 35¢ each. Bear in mind that these cover sets are produced in very small quantities, and their "collector value" in the future should be high.

Don't forget now! Let Old Russ know about your preferences on MAD...whether you want B&W MAD or COLOR MAD if you've already ordered, and send in all MAD orders before the end of February, when the price goes up drastically!

Keep ordering the new EC T-Shirt. I "printed" only 1000 shirts, and when I come out with a new design, I will not reprint the first, so in a very real sense these are limited edition T-Shirts! Get this first one before they're all gone! The next one will have O.W.'s face on it!

Thanks again for all your help and support, and...

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!!

Russ

